

Biological essentialism, gender ideologies, and the division of housework and childcare: comparing male carer/female breadwinner and traditional families

Mariana Pinho & Ruth Gaunt

To cite this article: Mariana Pinho & Ruth Gaunt (2021): Biological essentialism, gender ideologies, and the division of housework and childcare: comparing male carer/female breadwinner and traditional families, The Journal of Social Psychology, DOI: [10.1080/00224545.2021.1983508](https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2021.1983508)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2021.1983508>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published with license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.



Published online: 09 Oct 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



This article has been awarded the Centre for Open Science 'Open Data' badge.



This article has been awarded the Centre for Open Science 'Open Materials' badge.

Biological essentialism, gender ideologies, and the division of housework and childcare: comparing male carer/female breadwinner and traditional families

Mariana Pinho  and Ruth Gaunt 

University of Lincoln

ABSTRACT

The present study examined the role of individuals' social psychological characteristics in the division of housework and childcare responsibilities, comparing parents in role-reversed arrangements with parents in a more traditional division of roles. A sample of 353 parents with young children completed extensive questionnaires. As hypothesized, participants in role-reversed arrangements expressed more egalitarian gender ideologies and had a lower tendency to endorse biological essentialist beliefs compared to participants in a traditional division of roles. The findings further showed that parents' gender ideologies and biological essentialism were interrelated and predicted their involvement in childcare and housework. Finally, maternal gatekeeping mediated the effect of mothers' gender ideologies and biological essentialism on their involvement in housework and childcare. The findings shed light on the underlying mechanisms by which parents' ideologies shape the division of family work and can lead to more equality in the home.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 27 October 2020
Accepted 13 August 2021

KEYWORDS

Gender ideologies; biological essentialism; maternal gatekeeping; parental involvement; caregiving fathers; breadwinning mothers

Over the past few decades, men's and women's lives have become increasingly similar with women's increased participation in the labor force (McGuinness, 2018) and men's increased involvement in housework and childcare (Kan et al., 2011; Negraia et al., 2018; Sullivan et al., 2018). Nevertheless, women continue to bear the main responsibility for family labor (Horne et al., 2018; Negraia et al., 2018; Sullivan et al., 2018). While a growing body of research has attempted to understand and explain the gender gap in the allocation of family roles (e.g., Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020; Sullivan, 2019), it has mainly focused on parents' economic resources and structural constraints (e.g., Hook, 2012; Sullivan & Gershuny, 2016). As a result, much less is known about the operation of social psychological mechanisms in couples' division of responsibilities.

The current study aims to explore the role of parents' social psychological characteristics, namely their gender ideologies, biological essentialist beliefs and women's maternal gatekeeping tendencies. To this end, the associations between these characteristics and involvement in housework and childcare will be examined in a sample of British parents with young children. In addition, the ideologies and beliefs of parents in two distinct types of parenting arrangements will be compared: those in a traditional arrangement, where the mother is the primary caregiver and the father is the primary breadwinner, and those in a role-reversed arrangement, where the father is the primary caregiver and the mother is the primary breadwinner.

Despite the number of role-reversed couples being relatively small, a steady increase in their prevalence has been registered over the last decades (Boyer et al., 2017; Kramer & Kramer, 2016; Latshaw, 2011; Livingston, 2018). Nonetheless, relatively little is known about the social psychological characteristics of couples who reverse roles. By focusing on individuals who adopt these

unconventional arrangements and contrasting them with parents who adopt a more traditional division of roles, this study aims to reveal how ideologies and beliefs guide individuals' involvement in childcare and paid work within different family contexts.

Gender ideologies, biological essentialism and the division of family roles

The gender ideologies model argues that men's and women's beliefs regarding gender drive the division of family roles (Coltrane, 1996; Deutsch et al., 1993; Hochschild, 1989). This approach suggests that couples with traditional gender ideologies allocate tasks and roles along traditional lines such that the father takes on the role of breadwinner while the mother is the primary caregiver. By contrast, couples with egalitarian ideologies divide tasks more equally, leading to greater paternal involvement in childcare. In line with this approach, several studies found that mothers' (Gaunt, 2006, 2019; Pinho & Gaunt, 2020) and fathers' (Fischer & Anderson, 2012; Gaunt, 2019; Karre, 2015; Pinho & Gaunt, 2020) egalitarian attitudes are related to more equal division of childcare and housework, such that fathers with egalitarian gender ideology are more involved in childcare and housework mothers are less involved (Fetterolf & Rudman, 2014; Gaunt, 2006; Poortman & Van Der Lippe, 2009). Yet other studies failed to support this association (e.g., Rhoads & Rhoads, 2012). Research demonstrates that role-reversed or equal-sharing couples hold more egalitarian ideologies than traditional couples (Deutsch & Gaunt, 2020; Fischer & Anderson, 2012) and perform housework and childcare tasks according to their family role rather than prescriptive gender norms (Chesley & Flood, 2017; Deutsch & Gaunt, 2020; Pinho & Gaunt, 2019).

Compared to gender ideologies, biological essentialist beliefs can be considered relatively more implicit as they refer to beliefs about men's and women's predisposition to parenthood (Park et al., 2015). According to Bem (1993), biological essentialism rationalizes and legitimizes gender polarization by treating it as inevitable consequences of the intrinsic biological natures of women and men. Consequently, biological essentialism perpetuates a concept of inevitability of different treatment, expectations and roles for men and women and naturalizes gender inequalities (Bem, 1993). According to biological essentialist beliefs, pregnancy and lactation generate a stronger, intuitive drive in women to nurture and enhance their ability to parent. Men's lack of such experiences implies an absence of such primitive drive to care for their children, and instead portrays fatherhood as a learned behavior (Bem, 1993; Park et al., 2015). Essentialist beliefs increase in the presence of physical changes in women which are related to motherhood (pregnancy, breastfeeding, etc.) (Park et al., 2015, 2010). Research demonstrates that women who did not go through visual changes in the process of becoming mothers, such as adoptive mothers, were viewed in less essentialist terms than women who did (Park et al., 2015). Nevertheless, adoptive mothers were still viewed in more essentialist terms than adoptive fathers (Park et al., 2015).

Biological essentialist beliefs suppose gender differences beyond the physical characteristics, assuming that men and women are born with different predispositions for different roles (Rudman & Glick, 2008). Couples' beliefs of biological differences and their implications seem to be used to justify their division of childcare (Deutsch, 1999). Parents who endorse essentialist beliefs tend to have a less egalitarian division of childcare, in which women spend more time as care providers and perform more childcare tasks while men's participation is reduced (Gaunt, 2006; Riina & Feinberg, 2012). Evidence from qualitative studies show that primary caregiving fathers seem to possess less biological essentialist beliefs than primary breadwinning fathers and believe that men are equally capable of parenting (Deutsch & Gaunt, 2020; Solomon, 2014).

It is therefore hypothesized that primary caregiving fathers and primary breadwinning mothers will exhibit greater tendency to endorse egalitarian gender ideologies (Hypothesis 1a) and lower tendency to endorse biological essentialist beliefs (Hypothesis 1b) compared with parents in traditional division of roles. Moreover, it is hypothesized that parents' gender ideologies and biological essentialist beliefs will be related to their levels of involvement in housework and childcare. Specifically, mothers' egalitarian gender ideologies (Hypothesis 2a) and lower biological essentialism (Hypothesis 2b) will predict their

lower involvement in housework and childcare and their partners' higher involvement. Similarly, fathers' egalitarian gender ideologies (Hypothesis 2 c) and lower essentialist beliefs (Hypothesis 2d) will predict their higher involvement in housework and childcare and their partners' lower involvement.

Maternal gatekeeping and the division of housework and childcare

Maternal gatekeeping is generally defined as a set of attitudes and behaviors that discourage a collaborative effort between men and women in family work by limiting fathers' opportunities to fully engage in caring for their home and children (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Gaunt, 2008). Several studies have stressed the influence of this dynamic factor, showing the importance of mothers' views and behaviors in facilitating or inhibiting fathers' involvement in childcare and housework (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Gaunt, 2008; Gaunt & Pinho, 2018). Allen and Hawkins (1999) argued that due to women's lower social and economic status and limited opportunities in the workforce, expertise in housework and childcare can serve as a valuable source of power and self-esteem which facilitates gatekeeping behaviors. However, maternal gatekeeping should not be conceived as deliberate or intentional.

Different dimensions of maternal gatekeeping were recognized (Allen & Hawkins, 1999), namely *standards and responsibilities*, *maternal identity validation* and *differentiated family roles*. The *standards and responsibilities* dimension refers to the mother's monopolized behavior over the responsibility for family work, translating into her performing the majority of tasks as she perceives herself to hold higher standards (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Gaunt, 2008; Gaunt & Pinho, 2018). *Maternal identity validation* denotes a need for positive appraisal of the maternal role, while *differentiated family roles* refers to gender ideologies related to what is expected to be done by men and women (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Gaunt, 2008; Gaunt & Pinho, 2018).

Previous studies have shown that mothers' traditional gender ideologies and biological essentialism predict higher tendencies for gatekeeping (Gaunt, 2009; Kulik & Tsoref, 2010; Meteyer & Perry-Jenkins, 2010). Maternal gatekeeping, in turn, has been identified as a predictor of the division of family work (Gaunt, 2008; Gaunt & Pinho, 2018; Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2008). Specifically, research has demonstrated that the standards and responsibilities dimension of maternal gatekeeping predicted lower father involvement (Gaunt, 2008; Gaunt & Pinho, 2018), and maternal identity validation was associated with mothers' higher involvement in childcare (Cannon et al., 2008; Gaunt, 2008; McBride et al., 2005).

Qualitative research has also demonstrated that female breadwinners and equal-sharers were able and willing to let go of maternal gatekeeping behaviors, allowing their partners to be fully involved in housework and childcare (Deutsch & Gaunt, 2020; Pruett, 1987). Facilitated by lower endorsement of traditional gender ideologies and biological essentialism, reduced gatekeeping beliefs and behaviors appear to lead to a more equal division of family work (Deutsch & Gaunt, 2020; Gaunt, 2009).

It is therefore hypothesized that primary breadwinning mothers will exhibit lower gatekeeping tendencies than primary caregiving mothers (Hypothesis 3a), and that overall mothers' endorsement of maternal gatekeeping will be positively correlated with their higher time investment and greater share of childcare and housework tasks compared to their partners (Hypothesis 3b). Furthermore, maternal gatekeeping is expected to mediate the relationships between mothers' gender ideologies and biological essentialism and their involvement in childcare and housework. That is, the mothers' gender ideologies (Hypothesis 3 c) and biological essentialism (Hypothesis 3d) will have indirect effects on both partners' time investment in childcare and share of childcare and housework tasks, mediated by gatekeeping. Overall, it was predicted that the less mothers endorse traditional gender ideologies and essentialist beliefs, the lower their maternal gatekeeping tendencies, which in turn result in a more equal allocation of childcare and housework responsibilities.

Work and childcare in the UK

Our hypotheses were tested in a sample of British parents with young children. Despite having one of the highest employment rates in Europe for women (Eurostat, 2020), the United Kingdom is characterized by a male-breadwinner/part-time female-caregiver model, as reflected by the relatively large proportion of women in part-time jobs (McGuinness, 2018; Office for National Statistics, 2020). In recent years, 53% of British mothers of pre-school children worked part-time and 26% of mothers stayed home to provide childcare (Office for National Statistics, 2018, 2019). These patterns can partly be explained by the high costs of childcare services in the UK (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017), lack of state provision of childcare for small children and social disapproval of full-time employment for mothers (Phillips et al., 2018). Childcare services cost British families 33.8% of their income (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016), representing a constraint on families' ability to freely choose their family and work arrangements (Thompson & Ben-Galim, 2014).

Method

Participants

Data were collected from 353 British married or cohabiting heterosexual parents (203 women and 150 men) with at least one child aged 5 years or younger. Participants' ages range from 22 to 62 ($M = 35.90$, $SD = 5.42$). The age of the youngest child ranged from one month to 5 years ($M = 1.83$, $SD = 1.12$) and the number of children in the family ranged from 1 to 5 ($M = 1.62$, $SD = .75$).

Although the sample represented a broad range of socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, most participants identified as white (92%) and the sample included an overrepresentation of educated parents (86% had an academic degree). Most parents worked in lower managerial and professional sector (93%) and earned up to £38,200 a year (65%). Participants' work hours range from 0 to 80 per week ($M = 27.92$, $SD = 16.16$), with mothers working from 0 to 60 hours per week ($M = 29.56$, $SD = 13.33$) and fathers working from 0 to 80 weekly hours ($M = 25.67$, $SD = 19.21$).

To compare participants in role-reversed and traditional arrangements (Hypotheses 1a, 1b and 3a), participants were identified as either primary caregivers (71 women and 56 men) or primary breadwinners (57 women and 52 men) based on their and their partner's weekly hours of paid work and childcare. Participants who worked at least 10 weekly hours less than their partner and provided childcare at least 10 weekly hours more than their partner were defined as primary caregivers. Conversely, participants who worked at least 10 weekly hours more than their partner and provided childcare at least 10 weekly hours less than their partner were defined as primary breadwinners.

The allocation to study groups was validated through self-identification, by asking participants to report who is the primary caregiver in their family (on a scale from 1 = *My partner is the primary caregiver* to 5 = *I am the primary caregiver*) and who is the primary breadwinner in their family (on a scale from 1 = *I am the primary breadwinner* to 5 = *My partner is the primary breadwinner*). Additionally, participants reported the percentage of family income they contributed relative to their partner (on a scale from 0% to 100%).

Participants' self-identification confirmed their classification to the study groups, with those classified as primary caregivers based on time investment also reported that they assume this role in their family while those classified as breadwinners reported that their partners are the main caregivers. Similarly, those classified as breadwinners also reported that they assume this role in their family and earn a larger proportion of the family income while those classified as caregivers reported that their partners are the main breadwinners and that they earn a smaller proportion of the family income.

Participants whose division of labor did not include two distinct family roles were eliminated from the group comparison analysis. The majority of those participants were semi-traditional couples in which both partners worked for pay while still maintaining a traditional female-caregiver/male-breadwinner division.

Measures

Time investment

To assess time investment in work and childcare, participants were asked to indicate the number of hours they and their partners worked for pay per week, and the number of weekly hours in which they and their partners were the sole care providers for their child.

Involvement in childcare and housework tasks

The division of housework and childcare was assessed using a “Who-does-what?” measure of task performance (Gaunt & Pinho, 2018; Gaunt & Scott, 2014). The scale included 24 tasks and the participants were asked: “In the division of labor between you and your partner, which of you does each of these tasks?” Responses were indicated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *Almost always my partner*, through 3 = *Both of us equally* to 5 = *Almost always myself*. Participants also had the option to rate 9 when the task was not applicable to their child, and such responses were treated as missing data. The who-does-what scale includes four sub-dimensions (Gaunt, 2005): housework (e.g., cooking, cleaning, laundry), physical care (e.g., feeding, dressing, bathing, putting to bed), emotional care (e.g., playing, helping with social/emotional problems), and responsibility (e.g., planning activities, choosing daycare, taking to the doctor, providing sick care). Average scores for items in each sub-dimension were computed to obtain the participant’s score on involvement in the four types of housework and childcare. Cronbach’s alpha for the four sub-dimensions were .74, .83, .83, .91, respectively. An average of all childcare tasks was also calculated to create a total score in involvement in childcare. Cronbach’s alpha for this measure was .95.

Gender ideologies

Participants’ ideologies about gender were measured via a scale adopted from Gaunt (2006), which includes five items reflecting traditional and non-traditional ideologies (e.g., “*Men and women should share housework when both are employed*”). Responses were indicated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree* and were recoded so that a higher score reflected more egalitarian attitudes toward gender. The item “*Marriage is a partnership in which spouses should share the economic responsibility for supporting the family*” was eliminated to increase internal reliability of the scale. The average score for the remaining four items was computed in order to measure the respondent’s gender ideology. Cronbach’s alpha for this measure was .68.

Biological essentialism

Parents’ perceptions of men and women as being essentially different in their predispositions to parenthood was assessed using Gaunt’s (2006) measure. The scale is composed of seven items reflecting different views of mothers’ and fathers’ inherent abilities to perform childcare (e.g., “*Mothers are instinctively better caretakers than fathers*”; “*Fathers have to learn what mothers are able to do naturally in terms of child care*”). Responses were indicated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree* and recoded so that a higher score reflected higher biological essentialist beliefs. The average score for the seven items was computed in order to measure participants’ biological essentialist beliefs. Cronbach’s alpha for this measure was .85.

Maternal gatekeeping

Mothers’ tendency for gatekeeping was measured via Allen and Hawkins (1999) instrument. It consists of three separate dimensions: (a) *Standards and responsibilities* is assessed with five items regarding whether mothers hold higher standards for housework and childcare (e.g., “*I have higher standards than my husband for providing child care*”). (b) *Maternal identity confirmation* is assessed with four items concerned with the extent to which the mothers associate their maternal identity with observable competence in family work (e.g., “*When my children look well-groomed in public, I feel extra proud of them*”). (c) *Differentiated family roles* is composed of two items assessing mothers’ expectations and

beliefs about men's enjoyment and capabilities for doing family work (e.g., "*Most women enjoy caring for their children and homes, and men just don't like that stuff*"). Participants used a 4-point scale that ranged from 1 = *Not at all like me* to 4 = *Very much like me*. All responses were coded so that a high score reflected higher maternal gatekeeping tendencies. The respondent's average score on each dimension was computed. Cronbach's alphas for these dimensions were .81, .76 and .56 respectively. The average of all 11 items was also calculated to obtain a total gatekeeping score. Cronbach's alpha for the overall maternal gatekeeping scale was .83.

Socio-demographic variables

Participants indicated their age, occupation, level of education and ethnic background. Gender and age of the participants' youngest child, as well as the number of children in the household were also assessed. Participants also reported their individual annual income on a nine-point scale ranging from 1 (*less than £7,000*) to 9 (*more than £52,000*) and the percentage of family income they contributed relative to their partner.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through advertisements in children and community centers, playgrounds and playgroups across the United Kingdom. Recruitment was also made online through numerous parenting websites, web forums, blogs and social media. Participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire on the ways in which families organize work and childcare. To determine their eligibility, the participants indicated if they had children, how old their youngest child was and if they lived together with their child and the other parent. Participants who had more than one child were asked to answer the questions regarding their youngest child. The completion of the questionnaire took 20 minutes on average. Participants were then thanked and debriefed. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous.

Results

Preliminary analysis

Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson correlations among gender ideologies, biological essentialism, involvement in housework and childcare, maternal gatekeeping (for women only) and socio-demographic variables are presented in Table 1. In addition to age, the effects of parents' income and education were examined. Correlation analyses were conducted on the full sample separately for men and women.

The correlations among gender ideologies and biological essentialism were moderate; $r = -.39$ for women and $r = -.47$ for men. The analysis showed that women's gender ideologies were negatively correlated with performance of childcare ($r = -.26, p < .001$), housework ($r = -.15, p = .04$) and their own childcare hours ($r = -.22, p = .002$) (see Table 1). This indicates that the more egalitarian ideologies the mothers had, the less they were involved in childcare and housework. On the other hand, mothers' biological essentialist beliefs were positively correlated with their performance of childcare ($r = .41, p < .001$), housework ($r = .24, p = .001$) and their own childcare hours ($r = .20, p = .005$), proposing that the more they endorsed biological essentialism, the higher was their involvement in childcare and housework. Table 1 also shows that childcare hours performed by women's partners were negatively correlated with biological essentialism ($r = -.20, p = .004$), suggesting that the more women endorsed biological essentialist beliefs, the fewer childcare hours their partners provided.

Results in Table 1 further demonstrate that men's gender ideologies were positively correlated with their performance of childcare ($r = .23, p = .005$) and negatively correlated with their partners' hours of childcare ($r = -.26, p = .001$). These results suggest that the more egalitarian the father's gender

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations between the study variables.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Fathers'	
											<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
(1) Gender ideologies	–	-.47***	.23**	.12	-.04	-.26**	.12	-.03	.13	–	4.31	0.64
(2) Biological essentialism	-.39***	–	-.30***	-.16	-.12	.24**	-.04	-.03	.06	–	3.54	0.86
(3) Childcare tasks	-.26***	.41***	–	.70***	.59***	-.61***	-.07	-.19*	-.12	–	3.08	0.63
(4) Housework	-.15*	.24**	.67***	–	.61***	-.49***	.04	-.21*	-.22**	–	3.19	0.97
(5) Childcare hours – self	-.22**	.20**	.48***	.45***	–	-.23**	.03	-.15	-.19*	–	25.27	19.50
(6) Childcare hours – partner	.05	-.20**	-.57***	-.47***	-.09	–	-.09	.14	.10	–	22.28	18.87
(7) Age	.09	-.10	-.03	-.12	-.14*	.04	–	.02	.21*	–	37.32	6.66
(8) Education	.20**	-.04	-.15*	-.21**	-.29***	-.05	.16*	–	.24**	–	6.19	2.05
(9) Income	-.01	.07	-.10	-.13	-.14	-.05	.15*	.28***	–	–	5.10	2.46
(10) Maternal gatekeeping	-.25***	.40***	.23**	.33***	.19**	-.11	-.17*	-.13	.06	–		
Mothers' <i>M</i>	4.46	3.44	3.59	3.63	23.87	18.80	34.87	6.76	5.85	1.94		
Mothers' <i>SD</i>	0.59	0.75	0.66	0.92	17.73	17.96	4.01	1.72	2.16	0.53		

Higher scores on gender ideologies indicate higher levels of egalitarian beliefs; for all the other measures higher scores reflect higher levels of the construct. Correlations for fathers are presented above the diagonal; for mothers, below the diagonal. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

ideologies, the greater their involvement in childcare and the lower was their partners' involvement. Additionally, men's biological essentialism was negatively related with their performance of childcare ($r = -.30$, $p < .001$) and positively related with their partners' hours of childcare ($r = .24$, $p = .004$), indicating that the more essentialist beliefs they endorsed, the lower was their involvement and the greater was their partners' involvement in childcare.

The associations between maternal gatekeeping and women's performance of childcare, housework and hours of childcare were low to moderate. As can be seen in Table 1, maternal gatekeeping was positively associated with women's performance of childcare ($r = .23$, $p = .001$), housework tasks ($r = .33$, $p < .001$) and the amount of time they invested in childcare ($r = .19$, $p = .008$). The results indicate that mothers' greater gatekeeping tendencies were associated with higher involvement in childcare and housework and a less equal division of childcare tasks.

Table 1 illustrates that mothers' and fathers' hours of care were moderately and negatively related to hours of care by their partners. The intercorrelations among involvement measures of task performance and hours of care were generally moderate to strong ranging from .45 to .70.

More educated women tended to hold more egalitarian gender ideologies, and men and women with higher levels of education tended to be less involved in childcare and housework. In addition, women's and men's education levels were also correlated with their age ($r = .16$, $p = .024$; $r = .21$, $p = .011$, for women and men respectively) and income ($r = .28$, $p < .001$; $r = .24$, $p = .004$, for women and men respectively). Consistent with previous studies, men's income was negatively correlated with their involvement in childcare (tasks, $r = -.22$, $p = .008$; and hours of involvement $r = -.19$, $p = .021$) (Aldous et al., 1998; Pinho & Gaunt, 2020).

Gender ideologies, biological essentialism and involvement in childcare

Our first hypothesis suggested that compared with participants in a traditional division of roles, participants who maintain role-reversed arrangements would exhibit greater tendency to endorse egalitarian gender ideologies (Hypothesis 1a) and lower tendency to endorse biological essentialism (Hypothesis 1b). To test this prediction, gender and role differences in participants' gender ideologies were examined using a 2 (Gender: Male vs. Female) \times 2 (Role: Primary Caregiver vs. Primary Breadwinner) ANOVA (see Figure 1). This analysis revealed a main effect of gender, $F(1, 229) = 5.90$, $p = .02$, indicating that women ($M = 4.47$) had more egalitarian gender ideologies than men ($M = 4.28$). This main effect was qualified, however, by a Gender \times Role interaction, $F(1, 229) = 9.84$, $p = .002$. As predicted, breadwinning women and caregiving men ($M = 4.58$ and

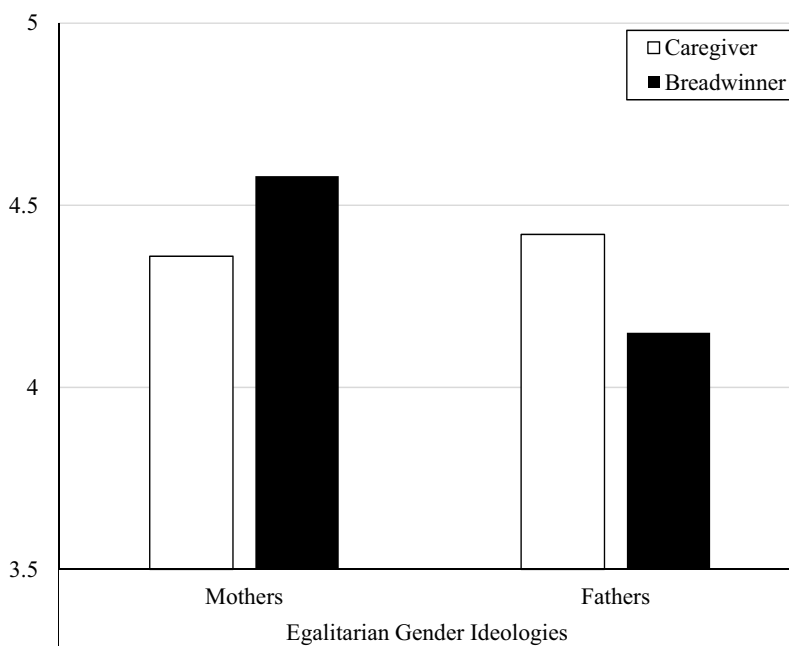


Figure 1. Gender ideologies by family role and gender.

$M = 4.42$ respectively) had more egalitarian gender ideologies than caregiving women and breadwinning men ($M = 4.36$ and $M = 4.15$ respectively). Within the caregiving role, women ($M = 4.36$) and men ($M = 4.42$) reported similar levels of egalitarian gender ideologies, $F(1, 226) = .27, p = .60$; while a significant difference was found among breadwinners, where women ($M = 4.58$) indicated higher egalitarian gender ideologies than men ($M = 4.15$), $F(1, 226) = 14.21, p < .001$.

A similar analysis was conducted on biological essentialist beliefs (see [Figure 2](#)). This analysis yielded no main effects of role or gender ($F(1, 228) = .07, p = .78$; $F(1, 228) = .31, p = .58$, respectively), but a significant Gender \times Role interaction, $F(1, 228) = 20.17, p < .001$. Also as predicted, breadwinning women and caregiving men showed lower tendency to endorse biological essentialism ($M = 2.24$ and $M = 2.27$ respectively) than caregiving women and breadwinning men ($M = 2.69$ and $M = 2.78$ respectively).

The second set of hypotheses suggested that parents' gender ideologies and biological essentialist beliefs would be related to their levels of involvement in housework and childcare. Specifically, women's egalitarian gender ideologies (Hypothesis 2a) and lower endorsement of essentialism (Hypothesis 2b) would predict their lower involvement in housework and childcare and their partners' higher involvement. Similarly, men's egalitarian gender ideologies (Hypothesis 2c) and lower essentialist beliefs (Hypothesis 2d) would predict their higher involvement in housework and childcare and their partners' lower involvement. To test these hypotheses and determine the contribution of gender ideologies and biological essentialism to each form of parental involvement, a set of multiple regression analyses was conducted for fathers and mothers separately. [Table 2](#) indicates that the regression equations of mothers' involvement in childcare tasks and hours spent in childcare on the gender ideologies measure (Model 1) were significant overall and accounted for 5%-7% of the variance. Gender ideologies was a significant predictor in these equations, suggesting that women's egalitarian ideologies predicted their lower share of childcare tasks and hours. Similarly, the regression equations of fathers' involvement in childcare and their partners' hours spent performing childcare on the fathers' gender ideologies measure were also significant, accounting for 5%-7% of the variance (see [Table 2](#), Model 1). Specifically, the more men endorsed egalitarian gender ideologies, the greater was their share of childcare tasks and the fewer hours their partner provided childcare.

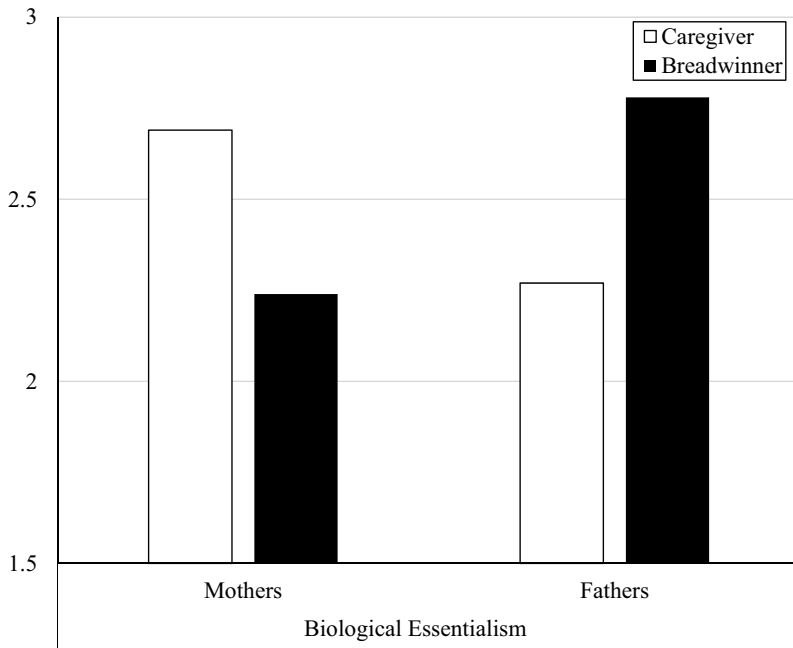


Figure 2. Biological essentialism by family role and gender.

Table 2. Hierarchical regression analyses predicting involvement in childcare from gender ideologies, biological essentialism and maternal gatekeeping.

Model	Childcare tasks			Housework			Childcare hours – self			Childcare hours – partner		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Women												
Gender ideologies	-.26***	-.12	-.12	-.14*	-.06	-.30	-.22**	-.17*	-.15*	.05	-.03	-.04
Biological essentialism	–	.36***	.34***	–	.21**	.11	–	.13	.09	–	-.21**	-.20*
Maternal gatekeeping	–	–	.07	–	–	.27***	–	–	.10	–	–	-.03
R^2	.07***	.18***	.18***	.02*	.06**	.12***	.05**	.06**	.07**	.01	.04*	.04*
$F(3,196)$		14.45***				8.69***			4.77**			2.76*
Men												
Gender ideologies	.23**	.11	–	.12	.06	–	-.04	-.12	–	-.26**	-.20*	–
Biological essentialism	–	-.25**	–	–	-.13	–	–	-.17	–	–	.15	–
R^2	.05**	.10**	–	.01	.03	–	.01	.03	–	.07**	.09**	–
$F(2,146)$		8.04***			1.97			1.82			6.78**	

Standardized beta coefficients are reported. Model 1: Gender ideologies only. Model 2: Gender ideologies entered first, followed by biological essentialism. Model 3: For women only, gender ideologies and biological essentialism are followed by maternal gatekeeping. * $p < .05$, two-tailed; ** $p < .01$, two-tailed; *** $p < .001$, two-tailed.

To assess the contribution of biological essentialism to involvement in childcare, a series of multiple regression analyses were conducted, in which biological essentialist beliefs were entered in the second step (Model 2). Table 2 indicates that the regression equations for mothers' involvement in childcare and housework on biological essentialist beliefs (Model 2) were significant and accounted for 6%-18% of the variance in maternal involvement. Biological essentialism was a significant predictor in all three regression analyses. The more biological essentialist beliefs mothers held, the higher was their involvement in childcare and housework tasks and the fewer the number of hours during which their partners were the sole care providers for their child.

Table 2 indicates a similar pattern of results for fathers. The regression equation for fathers' involvement in childcare tasks on biological essentialism (Model 2) was significant and accounted for 10% of the variance in fathers' involvement. Fathers' higher endorsement of biological essentialism predicted their lower involvement in childcare tasks. The more fathers believed that men and women were essentially dissimilar in their predispositions to parenthood, the less involved they were in childcare tasks. Overall, these results provided support for hypotheses 2a-2d.

Maternal gatekeeping and involvement in childcare

The third set of hypotheses suggested that primary breadwinning mothers would exhibit lower maternal gatekeeping tendencies than primary caregiving mothers (Hypothesis 3a), and that mothers' endorsement of maternal gatekeeping would predict their higher time investment and greater share of childcare and housework tasks compared to their partners (Hypothesis 3b). Additionally, it proposed that maternal gatekeeping would mediate the effect of mothers' gender ideologies and biological essentialism on their involvement in childcare and housework.

Role differences in mothers' gatekeeping tendencies were examined using independent sample *t*-tests (see Figure 3). As hypothesized, primary breadwinning women exhibited lower tendency for maternal gatekeeping overall ($M = 1.80$, $SD = .49$) than primary caregiving women ($M = 2.10$, $SD = .52$), $t(123) = 3.31$, $p = .001$, $d = .60$; as well as, in the measurement components related to standards and responsibilities ($M = 1.52$, $SD = .56$ for breadwinning women and $M = 1.86$, $SD = .64$ for caregiving women), $t(123) = 3.14$, $p = .002$, $d = .57$; and maternal identity validation ($M = 2.38$, $SD = .69$ for breadwinning women and $M = 2.69$, $SD = .74$ for caregiving women), $t(123) = 2.35$, $p = .02$, $d = .42$; but not on the differentiated family roles component of maternal gatekeeping, $t(123) = 1.54$, $p = .13$, $d = .28$ ($M = 1.36$, $SD = .66$; $M = 1.54$, $SD = .64$, for breadwinning and caregiving women respectively). These results provide support for Hypothesis 3a by suggesting that primary breadwinning mothers had lower tendency than primary caregiving mothers to manifest maternal gatekeeping beliefs and behaviors.

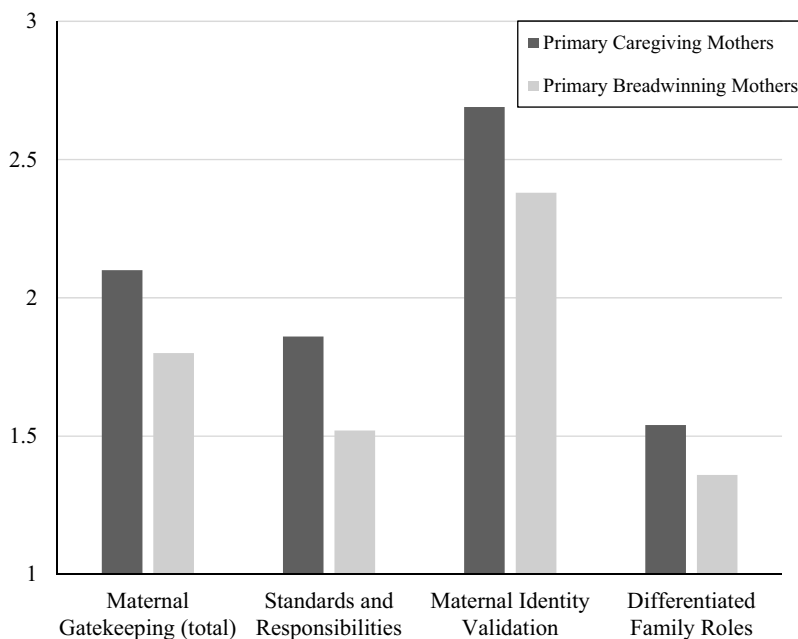


Figure 3. Maternal gatekeeping by mothers' family role.

Maternal gatekeeping was also entered in a third step to the regression analyses to determine its contribution to the division of roles beyond that of gender ideologies and essentialism (Hypothesis 3b). As shown in [Table 2](#) (Model 3), gatekeeping tendencies were a significant predictor of the variance in mothers' involvement in housework. The higher mothers' tendencies to gatekeeping were, the greater was their share of housework tasks compared to their partners'.

As indicated in [Table 1](#), greater tendencies for maternal gatekeeping were associated with more traditional gender ideologies and biological essentialist beliefs. We hypothesized that the mothers' gender ideologies (Hypothesis 3 c) and biological essentialism (Hypothesis 3d) would have indirect effects on both partners' time investment in childcare and share of childcare and housework tasks, mediated by maternal gatekeeping.

To assess these hypotheses, we evaluated a series of simple mediation models following the methods developed by Preacher and Hayes (2004). These analyses were conducted using the PROCESS program (Model 4; Hayes, 2013) with bias-corrected bootstrap estimates and 95% confidence intervals. [Table 3](#) illustrates the results of the mediation analyses. These results indicate that gender ideologies and biological essentialism had indirect effects on mothers' performance of housework. These effects were mediated by maternal gatekeeping and were significant, as indicated by bootstrap confidence intervals entirely below zero (95% CI [-.22, -.05]) for gender ideologies and entirely above zero (95% CI [.07, .22]) for biological essentialism. The results obtained also indicated that gender ideologies had a significant negative indirect effect on mothers' performance of childcare tasks, mediated by maternal gatekeeping, as indicated by bootstrap confidence interval entirely below zero (95% CI [-.11, -.01]). These results provide support for the hypothesized mediation process in the effect of gender ideologies and biological essentialism on mothers' involvement in housework and childcare tasks, but not on mothers' nor fathers' hours of care.

Discussion

The present study sought to examine the role of parents' social psychological characteristics in the division of housework and childcare responsibilities. It also compared parents in role-reversed arrangements with parents in a more traditional division of roles. The findings supported the first set of hypotheses regarding parents' gender ideologies and biological essentialism. In line with our hypotheses, participants in role-reversed arrangements expressed more egalitarian gender ideologies and lower endorsement of biological essentialist beliefs compared to participants in traditional arrangements. Believing that men and women are not designated for different tasks and are equally able to nurture, enables parents in role-reversed arrangements to divide their roles accordingly and share family work more equally (Deutsch, 1999; Pinho & Gaunt, 2019).

The findings further showed that parents' gender ideologies and biological essentialism were related to their involvement in childcare and housework. In line with our second set of hypotheses, the more women endorsed egalitarian gender ideologies and the less they endorsed biological essentialism, the smaller was their share of childcare and housework tasks, the less time they dedicated to it and the more hours their partners performed childcare. Also consistent with our hypotheses, men's greater endorsement of egalitarian ideologies and essentialist beliefs was related to their greater participation in childcare and housework and with their partners dedicating fewer hours to childcare. However, egalitarian ideologies and essentialist beliefs did not predict men's involvement in housework tasks. One possible explanation might be that egalitarian ideologies and essentialist beliefs center more around childcare, which is at the core of social prescriptions of parenthood, and not necessarily housework. When compared to childcare, housework is often hidden, not as cherished and usually involves unpleasant tasks whose reward is mainly extrinsic. For example, previous studies found a link between increased parental oxytocin levels and contact behaviors with children (Apter-Levi et al., 2014; Feldman et al., 2011), suggesting that involvement in childcare brings

Table 3. Bias-corrected bootstrap estimates for gender ideologies and biological essentialism with mediation by maternal gatekeeping.

	Childcare hours mother			Childcare hours father			Childcare tasks			Housework tasks		
	95% CI			95% CI			95% CI			95% CI		
	Estimate	Lower	Upper	Estimate	Lower	Upper	Estimate	Lower	Upper	Estimate	Lower	Upper
<i>Gender ideologies</i>												
Direct effect	-5.42*	-9.65	-1.18	0.69	-3.69	5.07	-0.24**	-0.39	-0.09	-0.10	-0.31	0.11
Indirect effect	-0.99	-2.57	0.01	0.72	-0.29	2.10	-0.05***	-0.11	-0.01	-0.12*	-0.22	-0.05
<i>Biological essentialism</i>												
Direct effect	3.49	-0.09	7.08	-4.5*	-8.11	-0.90	0.33***	0.21	0.45	0.15	-0.03	0.33
Indirect effect	1.08	-0.33	2.68	-0.20	-1.69	1.27	0.03	-0.02	0.08	0.13***	0.07	0.22

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

intrinsic rewards to parents. The same does not appear to be true for involvement in housework. Consequently, change toward men's increased involvement in housework is slower, even among men with egalitarian ideologies (e.g., European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020; Evertsson, 2014).

The findings allowed for an understanding of the contribution of participants' gender ideologies and biological essentialist beliefs to their involvement in childcare and housework. Participants' biological essentialism brought the largest contribution when explaining their involvement in childcare and housework. Therefore, findings related to the participants' beliefs that men and women are equally able to nurture appear to explain to a greater degree parents' involvement in childcare, housework and the amount of time dedicated to such tasks. Although previous research (e.g., Corrigan & Konrad, 2007; Gaunt, 2019) supports the proposed direction of associations, alternative directions or the effect of other factors cannot be excluded. As a result, it is possible, that mothers' and fathers' involvement in childcare or their sociodemographic backgrounds (e.g., education) shaped their endorsement of gender ideologies and biological essentialism.

The third set of hypotheses regarding the role of gatekeeping in the division of childcare was also supported. The results suggested that primary breadwinning mothers exhibit lower tendency to manifest maternal gatekeeping beliefs and behaviors than primary caregiving mothers, supporting our hypothesis and adding to previous literature (Gaunt, 2008; Gaunt & Pinho, 2018; Kulik & Tsoref, 2010). Although the pattern of results was in the expected direction, a role difference in the dimension of differentiated gender roles was not significant. The lack of significant differences could be possibly attributed to the relatively high levels of education in the sample, including that of women in traditional parenting arrangements, as highly educated women tend to have more egalitarian gender beliefs (Carriero & Todesco, 2018; Mannino & Deutsch, 2007). Furthermore, an argument could be made that the standards and maternal identity validation dimensions characterize better the concept of gatekeeping than the ideologies dimension as they inhibit father's participation to a greater extent.

Also in line with our hypothesis and previous research (Cannon et al., 2008; Gaunt, 2008; Gaunt & Pinho, 2018), the endorsement of maternal gatekeeping was associated with mothers' greater involvement in childcare and housework. Finally, maternal gatekeeping mediated the effect of mothers' gender ideologies and biological essentialism on their involvement in housework, partially supporting our hypothesis. Change toward closing the gender gap appears to be much slower for housework than childcare. In the UK mothers continue to perform significantly more housework than fathers (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2020). One reason might be that women are aware of the importance of fathers being highly involved in childcare and their beliefs regarding the relevance of father's role encourage higher involvement of men in childcare (Adamsons & Pasley, 2016; Fischer & Anderson, 2012). However, they may unconsciously remain more reluctant to share household chores.

Although gender ideologies and biological essentialism had indirect effects on the division of housework and childcare tasks, their effect on mothers' or fathers' time investment in childcare was not mediated. This may indicate that gatekeeping is mainly expressed in the overall household and childcare tasks rather than in time investment in childcare. That is, whereas traditional ideologies and biological essentialism affect couples' decisions on time investment in paid work and childcare, gatekeeping tendencies are mainly displayed in the performance of day-to-day tasks and routines.

Limitations and future directions

Although our study is the first to the best of our knowledge to explore the role of gender ideologies and biological essentialism in maternal gatekeeping and the division of childcare among parents in role-reversed and traditional arrangements, there is much room for further developments and methodological improvements in this area. First, our sample was characterized by an overrepresentation of middle class, well-educated parents who identified as White British. Highly educated and higher-income families are less prone to endorse traditional gender attitudes (Doucet, 2013; Karre, 2015) and it is therefore possible that the variance and levels of gender ideologies, biological essentialism and maternal gatekeeping in this study were relatively low. A more heterogeneous sample with a greater

representation of less educated parents from a lower socioeconomic background may reveal stronger relationships of maternal gatekeeping with gender ideologies, biological essentialism and involvement in childcare. Moreover, a more diverse sample would allow for the exploration of the role of ethnicity and culture in parenting practices and ideologies. In addition, the sample was restricted to heterosexual married or cohabitating couples who were parents of a young child, excluding other family structures (e.g., divorced, single, same-sex parents, etc.).

The reliance on self-report measures represents another methodological issue as single-source self-reports could be affected by social desirability and are thus less reliable than observations or a combination of multiple sources of data. Future research would benefit from integrating diverse measurement methods, including direct observations in the home setting.

While the findings from the current study focused specifically on gender ideologies, essentialism, and gatekeeping, couples' allocation of roles results from a complex combination of factors including structural and relational processes. Although our analysis controlled for a number of sociodemographic characteristics, relational ones were not taken into account. In particular, some studies attest to the importance of relationship quality (e.g., Lee & Doherty, 2007; Schieman et al., 2018) and relational equality (e.g., Martell & Roncolato, 2020) in the allocation of responsibilities. Other studies showed that perceived fairness in the division of family work affects women's happiness and marital quality (e.g., Dew & Wilcox, 2011), especially among egalitarian women and women in nations with high levels of gender equity (Greenstein, 2009; Kluwer et al., 1997). Future studies would therefore benefit from examining the role of relational equality and perceived fairness in conjunction with gender ideologies to obtain a more complete understanding of the division of family roles.

Overall, the findings from this study strengthen the accumulating evidence of the important role played by gender ideologies, biological essentialism and maternal gatekeeping in the division of childcare and housework (e.g., Aldous et al., 1998; Gaunt, 2019; Gaunt & Pinho, 2018). They shed light on the underlying mechanisms by which parents' ideologies shape the division of family work and can lead to more equality in the home.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

The author(s) reported there is no funding associated with the work featured in this article.

Notes on contributors

Mariana Pinho is a Research Fellow at the Eleanor Glanville Centre (EGC), University of Lincoln, UK. She holds a PhD in Psychology and her research interests include social psychology of gender, work and family and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Ruth Gaunt is a Reader in Social Psychology at the University of Lincoln, UK. She received her PhD in Psychology at Tel-Aviv University, and has held post-doctoral fellowships at both University of Louvain and Harvard University, and the Marie Curie Fellowship at University of Cambridge. Her research applies a social psychological approach to the study of gender, families and employment.

ORCID

Mariana Pinho  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0173-444X>

Ruth Gaunt  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0395-1429>

Data availability statement

The data described in this article are openly available in the Open Science Framework at <https://osf.io/4jch3/>.

Open scholarship



This article has earned the Center for Open Science badges for Open Data and Open Materials through Open Practices Disclosure. The data and materials are openly accessible at <https://osf.io/4jch3/>.

References

- Adamsons, K., & Pasley, K. (2016). Parents' fathering identity standards and later father involvement. *Journal of Family Issues*, 37(2), 221–244. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X13514407>
- Aldous, J., Mulligan, G. M., & Bjarnason, T. (1998). Fathering over time: What makes the difference? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 60(4), 809–820. <https://doi.org/10.2307/353626>
- Allen, S. M., & Hawkins, A. J. (1999). Maternal gatekeeping: Mothers' beliefs and behaviors that inhibit greater father involvement in family work. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 61(1), 199–212. <https://doi.org/10.2307/353894>
- Apter-Levi, Y., Zagoory-Sharon, O., & Feldman, R. (2014). Oxytocin and vasopressin support distinct configurations of social synchrony. *Brain Research*, 1580, 124–132. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brainres.2013.10.052>
- Bem, S. L. (1993). *The lenses of gender: Transforming the debate on sexual inequality*. Yale University Press.
- Boyer, K., Dermott, E., James, A., & MacLeavy, J. (2017). Regendering care in the aftermath of recession? *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 7(1), 56–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820617691632>
- Cannon, E. A., Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., Mangelsdorf, S. C., Brown, G. L., & Szweczyk Sokolowski, M. (2008). Parent characteristics as antecedents of maternal gatekeeping and fathering behavior. *Family Process*, 47(4), 501–519. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2008.00268.x>
- Carriero, R., & Todesco, L. (2018). Housework division and gender ideology: When do attitudes really matter? *Demographic Research*, 39(39), 1039–1064. <https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2018.39.39>
- Chesley, N., & Flood, S. (2017). Signs of change? At-home and breadwinner parents' housework and child-care time. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 79(2), 511–534. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12376>
- Coltrane, S. (1996). *Family man: Fatherhood, housework, and gender equity*. Oxford University Press.
- Corrigan, E. A., & Konrad, A. M. (2007). Gender role attitudes and careers: A longitudinal study. *Sex Roles*, 56(11–12), 847–855. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11999-007-9242-0>
- Deutsch, F. M. (1999). *Halving it all: How equally shared parenting works*. Harvard U Press.
- Deutsch, F. M., & Gaunt, R. A. (2020). *Creating equality at home: How 25 couples around the globe share housework and childcare*. Cambridge University Press.
- Deutsch, F. M., Lussier, J. B., & Servis, L. J. (1993). Husbands at home: Predictors of paternal participation in childcare and housework. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65(6), 1154–1166. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.65.6.1154>
- Dew, J., & Wilcox, W. B. (2011). If Momma ain't happy: Explaining declines in marital satisfaction among new mothers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 73(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00782.x>
- Doucet, A. (2013). Gender roles and fathering. In N. J. Cabrera & C. S. Tamis-LeMonda (Eds.), *Handbook of father involvement: Multidisciplinary perspectives* (2nd ed., pp. 297–319). Routledge.
- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2020). *Gender equality index, United Kingdom*. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2020/domain/time/UK/family>
- Eurostat. (2020). *Employment and activity by sex and age - annual data*. <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>
- Evertsson, M. (2014). Gender ideology and the sharing of housework and child care in Sweden. *Journal of Family Issues*, 35(7), 927–949. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X14522239>
- Fagan, J., & Barnett, M. (2003). The relationship between maternal gatekeeping, paternal competence, mothers' attitudes about the father role, and father involvement. *Journal of Family Issues*, 24(8), 1020–1043. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X03256397>
- Feldman, R., Gordon, I., & Zagoory-Sharon, O. (2011). Maternal and paternal plasma, salivary, and urinary oxytocin and parent-infant synchrony: Considering stress and affiliation components of human bonding. *Developmental Science*, 14(4), 752–761. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7687.2010.01021.x>
- Fetterolf, J., & Rudman, L. (2014). Gender inequality in the home: The role of relative income, support for traditional gender roles, and perceived entitlement. *Gender Issues*, 31(3–4), 219–237. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-014-9126-x>
- Fischer, J., & Anderson, V. N. (2012). Gender role attitudes and characteristics of stay-at-home and employed fathers. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, 13(1), 16–31. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024359>

- Gaunt, R. (2005). The role of value priorities in paternal and maternal involvement in child care. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67(3), 643–655. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2005.00159.x>
- Gaunt, R. (2006). Biological essentialism, gender ideologies, and role attitudes: What determines parents' involvement in childcare. *Sex Roles*, 55(7–8), 223–233. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-006-9105-0>
- Gaunt, R. (2008). Maternal gatekeeping: Antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Family Issues*, 29(3), 373–395. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X07307851>
- Gaunt, R. (2009). The role of mothers' gender ideologies and essentialist perceptions in maternal gatekeeping. In J. H. Ulrich & B. T. Cosell (Eds.), *Handbook on gender roles: Conflicts, attitudes and behaviors* (pp. 189–202). Nova Science Publications. ISBN: 978-1-60692-637-6.
- Gaunt, R. (2019). Social psychological predictors of involvement in childcare: The mediating role of changes in women's work patterns after childbirth. *Community, Work and Family*, 22(2), 183–202. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2018.1428170>
- Gaunt, R., & Pinho, M. (2018). Do sexist mothers change more diapers? Ambivalent sexism, maternal gatekeeping and the division of childcare. *Sex Roles*, 79(3–4), 176–189. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-017-0864-6>
- Gaunt, R., & Scott, J. (2014). Parents' involvement in childcare: Do parental and work identities matter? *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 38(4), 475–489. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684314533484>
- Greenstein, T. N. (2009). National context, family satisfaction, and fairness in the division of household labor. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71(4), 1039–1051. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2009.00651.x>
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis*. Guilford Press.
- Hochschild, A. (1989). *The second shift: Working parents and the revolution at home*. Avon Books.
- Hook, J. L. (2012). Working on weekend: Fathers' time with family in the UK. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 74(4), 631–642. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2012.00986.x>
- Horne, R. M., Johnson, M. D., Galambos, N. L., & Krahn, H. J. (2018). Time, money, or gender? Predictors of the division of household labour across life stages. *Sex Roles*, 78(11–12), 731–743. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-017-0832-1>
- Kan, M. Y., Sullivan, O., & Gershuny, J. (2011). Gender convergence in domestic work. *Sociology*, 45(2), 234–251. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038510394014>
- Karre, J. (2015). Gender-based attitudes and father involvement: Amount, assessment, and desires for more. *Fathering*, 13(3), 231–244. <https://doi.org/10.3149/fth.1303.231>
- Kluwer, E., Heesink, J., & Van De Vliert, E. (1997). The marital dynamics of conflict over the division of labor. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 59(3), 635–653. <https://doi.org/10.2307/353951>
- Kramer, K. Z., & Kramer, A. (2016). At-home father families in the United States: Gender ideology, human capital, and unemployment. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 78(5), 1315–1331. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12327>
- Kulik, L., & Tsoref, H. (2010). The entrance to the maternal garden: Environmental and personal variables that explain maternal gatekeeping. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 19(3), 263–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2010.494342>
- Latshaw, B. A. (2011). Is fatherhood a full-time job? *Fathering*, 9(2), 125–149. <https://doi.org/10.3149/fth.0902.125>
- Lee, C. S., & Doherty, W. J. (2007). Marital satisfaction and father involvement. *Fathering*, 5(2), 75–96. <https://doi.org/10.3149/fth.0502.75>
- Livingston, G. (2018). *Stay-at-home moms and dads account for about one-in-five U.S. parents*. Pew Research Centre. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/24/stay-at-home-moms-and-dads-account-for-about-one-in-five-u-s-parents/>
- Mannino, C. A., & Deutsch, F. M. (2007). Changing the division of household labor: A negotiated process between partners. *Sex Roles*, 56(5–6), 309–324. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-006-9181-1>
- Martell, M. E., & Roncolato, L. (2020). Share of household earnings and time use of women in same-sex and different-sex households. *Eastern Economic Journal*, 46(3), 414–437. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41302-019-00145-4>
- McBride, B. A., Brown, G. L., Bost, K. K., Shin, N., Vaughn, B., & Korth, B. (2005). Paternal identity, maternal gatekeeping, and father involvement. *Family Relations: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies*, 54(3), 360–372. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2005.00323.x>
- McGuinness, F. (2018, March 9). *Women and the economy* (Briefing Paper Number CBP06838). House of Commons Library. <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06838/SN06838.pdf>
- Meteyer, K., & Perry-Jenkins, M. (2010). Father involvement among working-class, dual-earner couples. *Fathering: Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice about Men as Fathers*, 8(3), 379–403. <https://doi.org/10.3149/fth.0803.379>
- Negraia, D. V., Augustine, J. M., & Prickett, K. C. (2018). Gender disparities in parenting time across activities, child ages, and educational groups. *Journal of Family Issues*, 39(11), 3006–3028. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X18770232>
- Office for National Statistics. (2018). *Families and the labour market, England: 2018*. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/familiesandthelabourmarketengland/2018>
- Office for National Statistics. (2019). *Families and the labour market, UK: 2019*. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/familiesandthelabourmarketengland/2019>

- Office for National Statistics. (2020). *EMP01 SA: Full-time, part-time and temporary workers (seasonally adjusted)*. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/fulltimeparttimeandtemporaryworkersseasonallyadjustedemp01sa>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2016). *Society at a Glance 2016: OECD social indicators*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264261488-en>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2017). *OECD family database. Childcare support*. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF3_4_Childcare_support.pdf
- Park, B., Banchevsky, S., & Reynolds, E. B. (2015). Psychological essentialism, gender, and parenthood: Physical transformation leads to heightened essentialist conceptions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 109(6), 949–967. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000040>
- Park, B., Smith, J. A., & Correll, J. (2010). The persistence of implicit behavioral associations for moms and dads. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 46(5), 809–815. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2010.04.009>
- Perry-Jenkins, M., & Gerstel, N. (2020). Work and family in the second decade of the 21st century. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 420–453. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12636>
- Phillips, D., Curtice, J., Phillips, M., & Perry, J. (eds.). (2018). *British social attitudes: The 35th report*. The National Centre for Social Research. http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39248/bsa35_gender.pdf
- Pinho, M., & Gaunt, R. (2019). Doing and undoing gender in male carer/female breadwinner families. *Community, Work and Family*, 24(3), 315–330. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2019.1681940>
- Pinho, M., & Gaunt, R. (2020). The determinants of paternal and maternal involvement in childcare. In N. Kaplan-Toren & G. J. van Schalkwyk (Eds.), *Parental involvement: Practices, improvement strategies and challenges*. Nova Science Publications (pp. 115–141). ISBN: 978-1-53616-828-0.
- Poortman, A., & Van Der Lippe, T. (2009). Attitudes toward housework and child care and the gendered division of labor. *Journal of Marriage & Family*, 71(3), 526–541. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2009.00617.x>
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. (2004). SPSS and SAS procedures for estimating indirect effects in simple mediation models. *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments & Computers*, 36(4), 717–731. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03206553>
- Pruett, K. (1987). *The nurturing father: Journey toward the complete man*. Warner Books.
- Rhoads, S. E., & Rhoads, C. H. (2012). Gender roles and infant/toddler care: Male and female professors on the tenure track. *Journal of Social, Evolutionary, and Cultural Psychology*, 6(1), 13–31. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0099227>
- Riina, E. M., & Feinberg, M. E. (2012). Involvement in childrearing and mothers' and fathers' adjustment. *Family Relations*, 61(5), 836–850. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2012.00739.x>
- Rudman, L., & Glick, P. (2008). *The social psychology of gender: How power and intimacy shape gender relations*. The Guilford Press.
- Schieman, S., Ruppanner, L., & Milkie, M. (2018). Who helps with homework? Parenting inequality and relationship quality among employed mothers and fathers. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 39(1), 49–65. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-017-9545-4>
- Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., Brown, G. L., Cannon, E. A., Mangelsdorf, S. C., & Sokolowski, M. S. (2008). Maternal gatekeeping, coparenting quality, and fathering behavior in families with infants. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22(3), 389–398. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.22.3.389>
- Solomon, C. (2014). “I feel like a rock star”: Fatherhood for stay-at-home fathers. *Fathering*, 12(1), 52–70. <https://doi.org/10.3149/ftf.1201.52>
- Sullivan, O. (2019). Gender inequality in work-family balance. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 3(3), 201–203. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-019-0536-3>
- Sullivan, O., & Gershuny, J. (2016). Change in spousal human capital and housework: A longitudinal analysis. *European Sociological Review*, 32(6), 864–880. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcw043>
- Sullivan, O., Gershuny, J., & Robinson, J. P. (2018). Stalled or uneven gender revolution? A long-term processual framework for understanding why change is slow. *Journal of Family Theory and Review*, 10(1), 263–279. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12248>
- Thompson, S., & Ben-Galim, D. (2014). *Child mind the gap. Reforming childcare to support mothers into work*. Institute for Public Policy Research. http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2014/02/childmind-the-gap_Feb2014_11899.pdf?noredirect=1